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AUTHOR Lauer, Linonel
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ABSTRACT

To meet the need for administrators from minority populations, the Philadelphia School District developed an administrator training program. The program developed a personnel pool of trainees including doctoral degree candidates and vice-principals working toward certification. Administrative internships were part of the training program. Fifty people who are currently vice-principals or administrative assistants are graduates of the program. The school district sees the program as worthwhile in meeting the needs of student unrest, racial confrontation, and underrepresentation of minority groups in leadership positions. (DW)

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/Training and Utilization of Administrators for Urban School Systems: The School District's Perspective./

SPEECH - AASA CONVENTION 2/22/

Lionel Lauer

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In order to view this program from the perspective of the School District of Philadelphia, one must examine the setting in which the program began.

A first consideration is that it was initiated by the school district itself in response to an assessment of need relating to political issues of the day. Student unrest, racial confrontation, under-represented minority leadership in the schools and administration, decentralization and others forced the district to scrap heretofore inviolate procedures in order to open up the system.

One approach was the use of a provision of the educational home rule charter that allowed the superintendent to select up to 5% of his total staff without employing the traditional examination process. A number of such appointments were made as vice principals in secondary schools. All such action was subject to board approval of course and was to later be known simply as "5% appointments". Penna. State made sincere overtures to deliver certification programs to many of the above, who incidentally were predominately black and not holders of the required principals certificates. Several accepted

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such a program and an empathetic relationship between two institutions took hold.

Going on at the same time was the detailed study of the vice principal's position through a joint committee of administration and the Philadelphia Association of School Administrators. It was recommended that a position of vice principal be established in the elementary school and present holders of that position be required to secure an elementary principal's certificate. Still another pool of personnel whose training would meet a rather high need.

The EPDA based prog am that was to grow from a proposal that had its roots in these causes, attempted to install several features in its initial structure.

Through a Policy and Selection Committee, one comprised of the Superintendent's cabinet and leading university staff, selection of personnel for the program was governed by the notion that a pool of eligibles be trained in areas of administration where needs appeared to be emerging within a five year period. Initially the two major groups in the program were vice-principals striving for certification and principals and central office personnel working on the ED.D or

PH.D. Those candidates not in administration at the time, were afforded a three month administrative internship with the thought that this was an approach to broadening their administrative internship with the thought that this was an approach to broadening their administrative background and also displaying the products of the program to key district and central office leadership.

This historical development of our perspective must also call to mind the sudden shift of conditions in Washington in the late 60's and early 70's. Sources of funds that appeared to be dependable dried up and with them an expanding school district, in terms of personnel to meet the leadership needs of newly designed programs, became instead a system that struggled to stay open from one contract negotiating period to the next.

As our program's first wave of trainees completed their requirements the perceived follow-through support system didn't produce for the participant what had been by him as the logical next step; that of a promotional opportunity.

Instead the school district by action said to the candidates, "to a great extent, you're on your own. This is as far as this

program can take you promotionally. If your training is sound you can compete equally with graduates of more traditional programs." And They Have.

However; as the song once said, "I never promised you a rose garden" neither did the school district see all graduates moving to the superintendency of a system or district within a 3 year period. Rather, if interest in producing system-wide change, for the improvement of opportunities for children still exists then this new found pool of expertise will apply their skills for the renewal of our school district on a school by school basis. We must at least light one little candle.

This program has been responsible for providing the certification requirements to 50 people now on the job in vice-principalships in our secondary schools and/or administrative assistants in the elementary schools. There are now or soon to be 20 people who have been awarded their doctoral degree; several directors, assistant directors, principals, a university dean, key person with OIC and assistants to district superintendents among them.

The pool of leadership from which to draw still abounds with people possessing training, creativity and drive.

In an effort to continue to draw attention to the potential of such people two additional features have been installed this year.

Doctoral program members have developed five teams and are producting research and position papers in areas that reflect the superintendent's goals and priorities for the eventual use of upper administration in dealing with the issues so reviewed.

As you might perceive, such a pool of skilled personnel are souqht after by other districts and institutions and several have gone on to become regional or national leaders.

Recognizing vast room for more sensitive support and develop ment of individuals the school district must from the perspective of considering the original needs for first implementing such a program, consider the Penna. State/School District of Philadelphia leadership training effort one most worthwhile and one that will deliver dividends for many years to come.